613 the same for the third grandson. The group of the sons' three families
614 constitutes what is called etúna or aval. The tribe (ayoń) gives its name to all the families which have been established since its founder.

614 Social relations are rare with foreign tribes, the tribe forming a
609 homogeneous whole where the stranger is received only with reserve
578 and when he shows goods which prove that his visit has no other aim but to come and look for a woman to marry. The [92] tribes are often hostile to one another, and while they no longer can make war, this hostility is still demonstrated by an atmosphere of haggling which always forces the weakest to give way. Several tribes have thus had to leave the N'Djolé region to settle farther downstream on the Ogooué because they could no longer live beside their neighbors.

574 On the other hand, visits among members of one tribe are frequent, presents are exchanged, and wives are bought.

761 Death (awu). Death is regarded as a change of village. After his
775 death, a person has become an inhabitant of the big village created by Nzame beyond the earth. There he will find the members of his family who already live there, and therefore he follows a very wide trail which leads him to the bank of the river Endam where his relatives who died before him come to await him. It may be that the crossing of the river is not immediate, and the dead man may have to stay for several days on the bank, which happens especially to people of whom the bivur have made human victims.

763 The dying person (edzegela) is attended by women who, when death has occurred, announce it on coming out of the hut, where all the inhabitants of the village then assemble. The corpse is taken from its bed and laid on the ground on mats; it is washed, rubbed with oil, and clothed in a white loincloth, then rolled in the mats and in pieces of bark, and tied. It stays this way in the hut until the grave is dug.

764 Funeral ceremonies immediately follow death. The wrapped body is carried by two men to the place of burial. The inhabitants of the village follow, one behind the other, and are present at the interment, which is done with a vine holding the body so that it does not fall suddenly to the bottom of the hole dug to receive it. The grave is oriented east-west, or is dug parallel to the course of the river which flows by the village, the head of the dead being placed upstream or to the east, the feet downstream or toward the west, so that the dead will lie in the direction of the river Endam. Before the grave is filled,

166 made fifty years ago, such a whole represented from 350 to 700
621 or 800 persons – while present-day villages rarely average more
361 than 100 inhabitants. With peace restored, the grouping has relaxed and divided into its constituent elements which have broken away to form neighboring hamlets. A special word, ngòra, is the name given to these hamlets which are considered as still forming the same whole.

621 Linked with the virile character of Fang society is certainly
562 [132] the accent on the separation of sexes as shown in daily
571 life. For the woman, the living place is the hut; for the man it
344 is essentially the "guardhouse." M. H. Kingsley writes: "The men spend most of their time in palaver houses built at each end of the street, while the women bring bowls of food the whole day
[784] long," (3) without being able to enter the abèñõ, which is absolutely

3. Travels in West Africa, p. 154.

forbidden them. H. Trilles defines this abèñõ as the place "where the men assemble to deal with community affairs, war, marriage,
[574] lawsuits, etc...," and where strangers are welcomed. In addition it is the place where the young men receive a large part of their education, where they learn, according to L. Mba, the most im-
621 portant interdicts (éki). Males of the same nd'è bòt assemble in
562 the abèñõ, which forms a virile grouping and one of kinship. In
571 its midst the authority of the "eldest" is expressed. He is both the symbol and the regulator of the life of the group, and the intermediary between it and the ancestors. Here not only are important transactions regulated, but work is also organized. The life of each one is subject to the control and the nearly constant censure of all. In it is created a cohesion so that this group is the most resistant element of Fang society. It is through the medium of this group, that the traditional Fang is assessed, is isolated as an individual, by the foreigner; he is not known in the first place as X but as a man attached to the abèñõ of Y. Such a grouping therefore represents a strong "community": the fusion, which favors effective kinship to the maximum (it is based on immediate filiation and "fraternity"), worship of the same ancestors, and joint

shed with a roof low enough to /43/ give good protection from the sun. Some villages are placed at right angles to the road; others follow an L or Y plan, with several minseñ. Family "allotments" are separated by hedges of euphorbia, castor-oil plant, hibiscus, and bougainvillea. Sometimes one comes across sheepfolds, although in old-style (and most contemporary) villages small livestock roam at will. A village often includes a guesthouse (ayak).

In building operations the man generally takes charge of the framework and the laths, leaving to the women the preparation and application of the banco /clay daub?/. But European-style huts with their elaborate door frames and often cement floors are more and more the work of specialized artisans, who are paid to supervise the family labor provided by the owner. These men have nevertheless preserved, along with the English term "mason," the old name nloñ nda, literally, hut-weaver, which goes back to the time when huts were made of sewn bark (1).

1. The dwelling continues to evolve: framed doors, windows, and shutters are in general use today. The dimensions of the buildings lead to the construction of a real frame. Finally, to possess a sheet-iron roof is a sign of wealth. In recent years there has arisen a real passion for the improvement of dwelling: in the Cameroons we may estimate that 10 percent of the dwellings now built in the bush are the most modern type. (J. B.)

2. Groupings and Relationships

The main divisions of Pahouin society are both exactly defined in the minds of its members themselves and at the same time uncertain for the European observer, who is constantly tempted to state them clearly in organic forms accessible to his "logic" and who is hindered by the variations or the dialectal confusions of Pahouin terminology. Father Trilles, basing his observations on the Fang of Gabon alone, reached a sort of palaeontological reconstruction of the "Fang nation," extremely theoretical, yet not without basis

861 initiations and now catechism bring all the boys and girls of a village together.

854 Adult surveillance is casual: grown people mainly want /95/ children to know their place and not to be a nuisance. Otherwise, it is mostly the older children who take care of the younger ones.

c. Adolescence

882 854 Boys and girls share their mother's hut until the beginning of adolescence, at which age the boys go to live by themselves, formerly in the "guardhouse," aba, nowadays in a hut on the paternal "allotment." Formerly, girls were sometimes married off before birth and [582] went to the husband's village at about eight years of age; this is very unusual today, but it is still fairly common for them to go at that age to a paternal or maternal aunt or to a married sister, where they act more or less as servants until puberty, being trained meanwhile. It is also quite common for boys to go to live with a relative whose [87] house is nearer a school than is their own village (1).

1. But a motive of proximity to school is not a complete explanation, merely an additional reason for leaving. In fact, a study of urban centers equipped with schools of a good level shows that 30 percent of the children live outside the paternal household with uncles or grandparents. Whatever a father's personal view, he could never refuse his son to relatives expressing a wish to have the boy for some time. (J. B.)

[574]

881 304 864 The bongô /children/ become ndôman, a youth, or ngon, a girl, at the onset of puberty. The transition is marked by circumcision among boys, atyi'i atyel, in the past sometimes followed by the first initiation, bekungu. Circumcision is done between the ages of six and twelve, usually around ten. Nowadays it is often done at a dispensary, while it formerly was the occasion of a family and village ceremony. Subjects for circumcision prepared for the ceremony with a relatively short seclusion (of a fortnight) during which they were

881 The nkpwé sô then defecated into the pot, which was buried in a secret spot near the sanctuary. The bevôn then took part in a mock battle at the end of which the nkpwé sô gave goats to their families. The initiated now went into the forest to cut a njôm pole, chosen, according to Allégret, by a woman whose husband had no luck at hunting—this pole was placed across two forks planted in front of the sanctuary near the nkal sô. Meanwhile, the bevôn had been cutting raffia "bamboo" to be used in making the ésam sô, an enclosure around the njôm. They returned in Indian file with their group "major" (ôsu zua) at the head; they set up the "bamboos" in a triangle open toward the back of the njôm, fastening them together with plaited raffia leaves the end of which an initiate buried in the nlak sô. During their marching by, which women and unitiated are not allowed to see, they were beaten with sticks by the initiates.

They then proceeded to a "crabbing" which consisted of immersion in water flavored with pimento. /This was/ the commencement of the third stage, which was continued by withdrawal into the forest, where the bevôn painted themselves white and engaged in a ritual hunt.

Meanwhile, initiates closed the ésam sô with two lianas representing a python (mvôm) and a Dendraspis (ayañ). The bevôn then were subjected to the ant-tree test in which they had to climb an angakomo tree on which weaver-ants lived whose bite is very painful. They then spent a night in the ésam sô, lying on thorns and rubbed with pimento juice, while masked initiates beat them and blew trumpets to keep them from going to sleep. The next day they went off on a round of visits through villages related or allied to their own, while the mfek sô and initiates carved and shaped the njôm in keeping with clan traditions. The designs had to be explained to the bevôn during the next stage, abete njôm, the erection, the setting up of the njôm.

Upon their return from the round of visits, the bevôn were tattooed by the mfek sô: three rows of incisions along the spine, the two outer ones spreading apart at the top like the sô's "halter," and a small triangular mark at the nape, perhaps the same as that of the ndôngô. They then put on a sort of skirt of raffia fiber, painted themselves white once more, and did a public dance during which the "major" mounted astride the njôm, the other bevôn after him. Anyone who fell off was rejected by the sô and had to leave the

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

now responsible and liable to two parties; if he is reasonable they all meet and talk the palaver. If the palaver is serious, each party appoints his *ntol* (ambassador). The palaver is usually talked in the main street of the town, before all the representatives of the interested clans, and before all strangers in town. The Fang are born orators, and remarkable gestures and orations are made while talking the palaver. The speaker usually walks backwards and forwards grasping and leaning upon a "palaver stick." He commences with: *M'zona* (I say thus); when speaking for another he says *A'zona* (he says thus); when speaking for the people of his town, *Ba zona* (they say thus). Sometimes the *ntôls* (ambassadors) sit in a canoe in the middle of a river or a stream, and talk the palaver, the injured parties being on either side of the stream. The case is talked, the goods demanded in payment stated, and an effort made to *kik nsang* (cut or end the palaver). If they succeed, then the palaver *is cut* (ended), and a dance follows; if no agreement is come to, the meeting breaks up and a tribal war exists between these clans.

Salutations.

There are three salutations common to all. Two friends meet, they each grasp the arm of the other, high up on the biceps; a slight pause is made, then the hand is slipped down to clasp the wrist. This is also the customary salutation used by the Bulu.

Two friends meeting salute by embracing.

A traveller entering the *abeng* (palaver house) walks over to the headman and sits on his knee a moment, at the same time placing one arm around the headman's neck.

Hospitality demands that all strangers be served food by the town women to strangers in the *abeng*.

Wives are loaned to guests.

Coarse conversation is indulged in by old and young of both sexes.

Considerable license prevails among the unmarried; less so among the married.

VIII.—*Invention, Natural Forms, Conservatism.*

Invention.—The arts in use are common to all the different clans of the great Fang tribe. Any new discovery as the working of iron is credited to the dwarfs or *nqui*. The natives are always ready to admit that the *nqui* are very clever; they have a saying "no person knows like a *mon nqui* (dwarf) what is inside the forest." When obtainable the natives use an imported saw, or file, and admit its superiority over their own crude tools. A Fang may be impressed at the knowledge and power of the white man, but is not greatly surprised; the reason for this is that many white men are credited with possessing supernatural powers.

Some of the clubs, tools and weapons approximate to the natural forms of the branches or roots of trees. Axe handles and the handle of a certain kind of adze have

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

this is, because, to a Fang eye, polished brass looks *mbung* (handsome) and is attractive for trade. Vessels are usually placed on top of the fire and not suspended over it; vegetables are frequently placed in stews. No separate dwelling house exists for cooking, it is carried on in the dwelling house. The water used to wash a dirty pot with is often thrown out on the earth floor of the dwelling, children playing in the wet dirt. In all domestic matters the Fang are very filthy. I have on more than one occasion when inside a native hut seen children micturate and defecate on the earth floor close to where the mother was cooking, the women and men present taking very little notice, and only occasionally placing the child outside the door. Cooking is exclusively the duty of women, a *real man* will not cook. Food is often highly seasoned with hot native red and green peppers, and food thus prepared is much appreciated. The food is usually well cooked through, with the exception of plantains which are often only half boiled and served quite hard. Large round stones are used for rubbing and reducing to powder gourd seeds and various tubers. Smoking and salting are the only methods practised for preserving food, and on account of the value of salt and the difficulty of transporting it inland, it is seldom thus employed.

Drinks.—Rum has been carried from the coast by white traders and natives far inland and is used whenever obtainable, but the chief drink is cold water. Palm wine is made called *meyak*. Except in places where a trade factory existed I have seen very few cases of intoxication among the Fang, but when they can obtain rum it seems to completely demoralize them. Tea and coffee are known to people living near white settlers. When a party of headmen and others have taken a meal at the mission house, tea and coffee were greatly enjoyed and cups frequently re-filled. The first meal is usually about eight or nine o'clock; the natives think the white man eats very early; a mid-day meal is served and the evening repast is usually about sunset.

Food is frequently brought to the men inside the *abeng* (palaver house); at other times an entire family eats together inside the dwelling house. No ceremonies whatever precede the commencement of meals. When a son is born, or on the occasion of a wedding, and after some large palaver has been settled, a feast is usually given. Invited guests and strangers partake together with the town folk of the food prepared; it is usually served on the earth floor of the palaver house, on plantain leaves, and in cooking pots, each person helping himself. The women do not eat with the men inside the palaver house.

Mode of preparing Mboa.

Ba du mbóa osui, e vóm a ne ndâtâl: a kaga boma mēlu mēla, be keli tâs: be sâli ne nye: be nâû mbûk: be kēzi nye mbûk iti be nou ntum: beña tyak: bènga vul: be kaga mana vul: be kēzi nye ē mvē: vckoba ji: ve telē mvè mboa: wena mboa abea.